10 March 2022 Webinar

Keeping Learning Alive – from understanding to tackling needs of the disrupted and displaced Ukrainian Higher Education community
This event was a partnership between The Conduit, scienceforukraine.eu and How to Change the World.

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Speakers included 3 university leaders still in Ukraine (internally displaced):

Dr Roman Petrov, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Head of Law Department)
Dr Larysa Chovnyk, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Head of International Office)
Dr Ganna Tolstanova, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Vice-Rector for Research)

Joining them were:
Oleksandra Ivanschenko and Maciej Maryl from scienceforukraine.eu
Oksana Seumenicht, Ukraine Academic International Network
Siobhan Coskeran, Student Action for Refugees (UK)

chaired by Jason Blackstock of *How to Change the World,* response from J. Crowley from Mercy Corps

These notes bring together the key points made by panel as a whole:

situation on the ground

- Ukraine has a very large HE sector, with about 600 HE institutions, 1/3 of which are in the parts of the country currently facing the worst conflict
- huge displacement of staff and students, both internal and into other countries
- significant infrastructure damage to universities
- teaching and research have stopped, until at least the end of March, but probably much longer
- even if university operations were able to resume, they would only be able to restore 50-60% of teaching capacity, because of loss of staff and students through displacement
- there is normally a large contingent of international students who have left or are in the process of leaving
- only 20-30% of students have a high enough level of English to be able to undertake university study in English

main needs

- possibilities for current students – especially those very close to graduating – to complete their studies, ideally still under the aegis of their home university, or, if not, by transfering to other institutions. If something could be done for whole cohorts, not just individuals, that'd be best. PhD students are very important group here too.
- a longer term programme of distance learning, in both English and Ukrainian, which would assist the recovery of the Ukrainian HE system, and maintain its identity, and avoid the atomization of the academic community.
- pedagogical and technical support and advice on conducting distance/asynchronous teaching and learning at university level
- in order to counter the issue of brain drain, short-term grants for people returning to Ukraine when it's safe to do so, and also to be able to restore infrastructure; a recovery fund for HE and research
- support for the 75% of scholars (staff and students) remaining in Ukraine
- English-language support (academic English) to prepare students to pursue English-language courses/programmes
- support for academics to translate cvs from Ukrainian into English
- ways of employing academics from a distance (i.e. from within Ukraine), e.g. to collaborate on research projects, keeping in mind they may struggle to work full-time and to maintain reliable internet access
- where there are opportunities internationally, there needs to be designated support for people applying, and flexibility in terms of ways of providing documentation, etc; contact points within international universities who can assist with the actual transfer of academics/students to the university (logistical, financial)
- important to prevent the atomization of Ukrainian academia
- creation of safe places for Ukrainian research assets like databases, libraries

proposed actions
- Ukrainian students who are currently in the UK on temporary study visas need support with finance and status. Under the conditions of their visa they can't draw on any government benefits. Universities need to act individually in line with their duty of care to students, and the government needs to be pressured to guarantee safety and support. Student Action for Refugees has an excellent template letter to send to your MP here.
- all international academic support and opportunities should be listed in the central portal that's been set up by a wide range of academic volunteers (scienceforukraine.eu). This includes a range of disciplines, not just science. This needs wide dissemination including to NGOs working on ground, e.g. at borders. Support is needed for students/academics applying for programmes/opportunities listed.
- pooling of existing online courses (in English), granting free access, and matching courses with what students need to complete their degrees
- the establishment of an Open Ukrainian University in which online courses could be offered by Ukrainian/Ukrainian-speaking academics to students from all the HE institutions in Ukraine. Would need to grant credit and allow students to

complete/continue their studies. Many academics are already connected to each other through [Ukraine Academic International Network](#)

- access to libraries and e-resources for students and academics
- institutions who have research collaborations with Ukrainian partners are requested to take on the hosting of the collaboration and continue to work with partners
- money saved from freeze on research and other collaborations with Russian academia could be dedicated to a recovery fund for Ukrainian academia